

## GREEN NIGHT AT THE TEXAS COWGIRL

How was I to know what she had in mind when she caressed my shoulder from behind with one hand and stood there scampy dressed asking me if I was ready for a "table dance?"

The night was still young and I was engrossed in what was going on up on stage where another with nothing on at all was bouncing to the music, bending over and grinding vulgarly around.

I'd never been to Houston before and had no idea what might be going on inside this place that advertised "show girls" in blinking lights. I thought the "show girls" worked up on stage,

but I was wrong. They were all over the place. When I looked around I could see that they had infiltrated the audience. How could so many girls be in this one place? And on a weeknight!

I could see the bills, folded longways, stuffed underneath the elastic band that went around their waists and held up that tiny triangle of cloth that constituted all they wore by law.

She told me it was her birthday, and before she'd always received lots of twenties, but now she hadn't received a single one. Said she usually charged fifteen and there she went, dangling in my face.

## REPORT

I know this is long over due. I'm sure you want to know what has been going on. You demand an accounting, and rightly so. This won't take long. I'll be brief.

I am utterly afraid for you to know how things really stand.

You'll say I don't even deserve the dust that has settled so thickly on the surfaces of my idle life. And you're right.

I'll tell you right off, I don't have any pretexts.

There are no excuses. I could ramble on for hours describing in detail

the little why's and wherefore's that have impeded any semblance of progress, but that would just bore you and press me harder against the wall I've backed myself into.

There's no sick baby, no wrecked car, not even a nagging wife to blame --

just lost dreams and ailing hopes.



I won't enumerate the specific mistakes I've made. That would be to dwell on trivialities. Everything I do is just a fraction of one big on-going mistake.

So, there you have it. My only defense is no defense at all -- a comprehensive admission of total guilt. I here cede all hope, and place my very self at your mercy. Have done with me.

-- James Miller Robinson

Delegacion Iztapalapa, Mexico

#### ON THE VERANDAH

A screened porch. The house was old, crumbling, condemned, soon to be razed to make way for an arid marble annex to the Library of Congress. As summer started to steam, we found refuge there. Whoever came to the front door felt mild airs lap his cheek as we opened it, was bound to hear ice chunk against the inside of a Libby glass

pitcher from back of the house, three rooms away, no matter what time of day. A huge fig tree spread gluey, dog-scented shadows through the yard, drenched the porch in a wavery undersea only candleflecks of sunlight could get through. It stuck the hand-shaped prints of its leaves on parts of our bodies as we played we were plaster casts poured

from famous Greek statues. There was one blank wall across the yard from us, high fences on both sides, no one to see us. We would vaseline our skin, strike poses, make love straddling a kitchen chair, you riding my lap, I sometimes riding yours, fall asleep after on the wicker settee, a thin Kashmir shawl shrouding our crossed fallen

limbs. We were living the Southern Decadence we read about, took long, hot baths, ate peaches in the nude, drinking the juice from each other. I did not care for the warm tallow that held us together, the incense, the chants, the Tantric poses you would assume, though I could stroke your back for hours, the breath of my mouth softly ruffling your hair.